



Testimony in support of
LD 1703: An Act To Create Equity
for Wine and Spirits Container Deposits
January 17, 2018

Good afternoon Senator Saviello, Representative Tucker, and the esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. I am Rep. Ellie Espling, and I'm here to present LD 1703, ***An Act To Create Equity for Wine and Spirits Container Deposits***.

This bill makes no changes to the existing bottle redemption program structure. It does not, in any way, affect the redemption businesses or the rate at which they are reimbursed for redeeming beverage containers. It provides for equal marketplace treatment for spirits and wine containers as compared to all other beverage containers.

LD 1703 seeks to implement a uniform refund value of all wine and spirits containers of five-cents per unit. LD 1703 would have minimal/no costs to the state and would create a level-playing field with other states and keep more money in the hands of the consumer. This bill allows for a uniform redemption value for all beverage containers eliminating any confusion about the deposit amount that should be charged at retail. Additionally, LD 1703 would streamline the collection process for manufacturers' labels and handling at redemption centers.

This bill would allow the state to be more competitive with neighboring New Hampshire for wine and spirits sales - which has neither a bottle deposit nor sales tax on spirits containers. As a strictly recycling question, glass is glass, plastic is plastic and size does not matter. When a beverage container gets back to the redemption center, the liquid is gone and the issue is simply the eventual disposition of the container.

All beverage containers only comprise about 5.6% of all litter in Maine - behind Paper 25.1%, Plastic 20.5%, Fast Food packaging 16.4%, and Candy Wrappers 13.5% - According to a 2010 American Beverage Association survey of litter. Of that 5.6% of all beverages - wine and spirits containers make up a very small portion of the container waste stream in Maine (that could be littered in the first place) - in the low single digit percentage range.

There is no data which shows that a one-liter soda bottle with a deposit at 5-cents - is littered more than a one-liter spirits bottle with a deposit at 15-cents. Littering behavior is unlikely to change simply because of LD 1703.

###